

To: Chair Donna Sweaney - House Committee on Government Operations

I am absolutely opposed to H.355 which would enact a system of forester licensing and regulation. Please stop this legislation.

I am a professional forester with a B.S. degree in Forest Management from University of Maine 1963. I have worked as a professional forester for 52 years and have practiced in 7 states and also in the United States Senate for 6 years involved in forest policy issues on a national basis as a member of the staff of the Chair of the Senate Forestry Committee, Senator Larry Craig of Idaho.

I have extensive experience in all aspects of forestry and my experience includes 23 years in the state of Vermont.

I have neither seen nor heard anything occurring in Vermont which would give me any concern about the capability or ethics of foresters as they practice their profession. If there are instances of folks mis- representing themselves as foresters and causing problems, it is so small as to be off my radar screen and an insignificant issue. I communicate with many foresters in the state and haven't heard any issues, nor have I seen anything in news reports. THIS IS NOT A PROBLEM IN VERMONT!

I have read the Sunrise Report and there is nothing there which compels me to believe that forester licensing will solve any significant problem in the state of Vermont. As a forester, of course I do believe the practice of forestry is important in Vermont given the percentage of woodlands we have and the needs of private landowners. As I see it, foresters in Vermont are very serious about keeping up with the latest research and developments in the profession through workshops, and other forms of continuing education. I just don't see there is a problem with the way forestry is being practiced currently. The fact that neighboring states have licensing laws doesn't carry any water as far as I am concerned. They probably don't need it either.

Please don't tell me I'm going to be "grandfathered -in" to licensing due to my past experience. I don't want to be licensed, period. If I must be, I am done. Actually, I would consider licensing an insult as I am very proud of my career over more than five decades - all accomplished without the stigma of being "licensed" by operatives of the State of Vermont.

Lastly, I find it unbelievable that the Vermont legislature - in light of the extremely serious budget-balancing issues facing them - is considering another piece of legislation which will require new state oversight and adjudication. Why? I know, you say it won't cost much because we are just going to throw the supervision of this new law onto the backs of current state employees by simply adding it to their responsibilities without providing any appropriations to go along with it. If that is what you are thinking, it shows how important you really think this proposed law is. It is not important and in a time of fiscal crisis, it is ludicrous to consider new legislation such as H.355.

Thank you for your consideration.

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